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DE RUEHBY #0577 1090640
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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4589
INFO RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY IMMEDIATE 1533
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA IMMEDIATE 1033
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 4552
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE IMMEDIATE 2390
RUEHBD/AMCONSUL PERTH IMMEDIATE 1158
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY IMMEDIATE 0279
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000577

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STATE FOR EAP/ANP
PACOM ALSO FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2016

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [AS](#) [BP](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA DEPLOYS TROOPS, POLICE TO SOLOMON ISLANDS

REF: A. PORT MORESBY 169

[1](#)B. PORT MORESBY 170

Classified By: Deputy PolCouns John W. Crowley
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Prime Minister Howard announced on April 19 that Australia would deploy 110 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and about 70 police to Honiara to help maintain law and order in response to post-election rioting in the Solomon Islands capital (reftels). Four C-130 aircraft are preparing to transport the ADF forces from Townsville, Queensland, on the afternoon of April 19 with arrival in Honiara scheduled that night. A six-man team from the AFP Special Response Force departed on the morning of April 19, with another 60 AFP personnel scheduled to depart later in the day.

[1](#)2. (C) The GOA decision was taken in response to a request for assistance co-signed by the Solomon Islands caretaker prime minister and Prime Minister-elect Snyder Rini to the Australian Prime Minister on April 19, according to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Solomon Islands Desk Officer Will Nankervis. So far, there have been no reported deaths among the approximately 300 police and 60 military personnel currently comprising the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), but 19 Australian police and two New Zealand police received non-life threatening fractures and lacerations during the unrest, according to Nankervis. He said there have been no reports to date of deaths or serious injuries of Australians resident in the capital.

[1](#)3. (C) Nankervis said the GOA "deplores" the attacks on the RAMSI police officers and considers the situation in Honiara "serious." The GOA has been providing updates to other RAMSI countries (New Zealand, Tonga and Papua New Guinea) and Pacific Island Forum members on developments in the Solomon Islands. DFAT has posted a revised travel advisory for the Solomon Islands on its website (www.smartraveller.gov.au), advising Australian citizens to reconsider any planned travel there, due to "continuing significant civil unrest" and to avoid the capital center, especially eastern Honiara and the Chinese district.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The GOA assesses that attacks on RAMSI police, including the torching of nine police vehicles, were opportunistic and not reflective of hostility specifically directed against RAMSI. There is less clarity here about the ethnic violence, but DFAT believes attacks on Chinese

businesses seemed to have been motivated partly by perceptions that some Chinese business owners were allied with factions supporting PM-elect Rini. End comment.